

The Supremacy of Christ

A Study of Colossians

Week 02: Christ - Supreme in Creation and Redemption

Scripture

Colossians 1:15-23

Key Points (Where We Are in History)

- Paul wrote to the Colossian Church, while he was under house arrest in Rome
- They had never met in person, but Paul wrote in response to the report of Epaphras (their pastor)
- The church was facing pressure to *mix religious systems*
- Paul then wrote with the goal of showing Christ's supremacy over all things
Supreme – the highest rank, power, and authority in an organization or system

Motivation (Why They Need to Know It)

Today, we'll be getting to the heart of Paul's writing - the supremacy of Christ.

Rather than begin with calling out the wrong, religious influences in the church FIRST, Paul begins with telling them WHO JESUS IS.

Information (What They Need to Know)

Last week we ended with *Paul's thankfulness and prayers* for the Colossian church.

Thankful for...

Their faith in Christ; Their love for others; Their hope for the future

Prayers for...

Being filled with the knowledge of God's will; Living lives that please God; Strengthening with God's power

Then it's Paul's concluding words in prayer which began to paint a picture of God's work through His Son, Jesus.

Colossians 1:13 (ESV) He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- God delivered us from the power and penalty of sin through Christ
- God transferred us into the kingdom of God through Christ
- God offered forgiveness of sin through Christ

The words that follow proclaim Christ as the Supreme One - Creator and Sustainer.

Why did the Colossian Church need to be reminded of Christ's supremacy?

Colossians 2:8 (NLT) Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, **rather than from Christ.**

There was a danger in being influenced by **Empty Philosophy**

“Philosophy is the love of wisdom, but if one loves wisdom that is not Christ, he loves an empty idol.” - Bible Knowledge Commentary

So, Paul's response to this potential influence over the Colossian Church was to show that Christ is the Supreme - Creator and Sustainer

Colossians 1:15-20 may be a poem or hymn expressing belief about Jesus.

Read this together responsively...

Colossians 1:15 (ESV) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **16** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. **17** And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. **19** For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, **20** and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1:15 (ESV) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

- Christ is the perfect reflection of God; God is fully revealed in Jesus
- Not *first created*, but *highest rank*; existed before creation; therefore, above it

Colossians 1:16 (ESV) For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

“Jesus is not only the agent of creation but is also the *goal* of creation, for everything was created by him and for him, that is, for his honor and praise.” - ESV Study Bible

Colossians 1:17 (ESV) And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Christ sustains all of creation so that it works together harmoniously.

Colossians 1:18 (ESV) And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Christ is head of the church and the church receives its life from Him; He deserves to be preeminent (first place) in the church.

Colossians 1:19 (ESV) For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

“Man is reconciled to God when God restores man to a right relationship with him through Jesus Christ. An intensified form for ‘reconcile’ is used in this verse to refer to the total and complete reconciliation of believers and ultimately ‘all things’ in the created universe.” - John MacArthur

Application (What They Need to Do)

What does the supremacy of Christ mean for us?

Who we were, we are no longer.

Colossians 1:21 (ESV) And you, who *once* were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has *now* reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Once: Alienated from God, Hostile in Mind, Doing Evil Deeds

Now: In Christ we are - Reconciled, Holy, Blameless, Above Reproach

What's the proof of reconciliation?

- Continue in the faith, stable and steadfast (Christ presents us to God; we don't present ourselves)
- Not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard (We began in faith and we remain in faith)